
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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|--------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Property Address: | 2707 Woodley Road NW | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda |
| Landmark/District: | Woodley Park Historic District | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar |
| ANC: | 3C | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Design |
| Meeting Date: | June 24, 2010 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration |
| H.P.A. Number: | 10-246 | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction |
| Staff Reviewer: | Brendan Meyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision |

The applicant, owner Mats Persson, seeks concept approval for a third floor stucco addition to a 2-1/2 story brick rowhouse at 2707 Woodley Road NW in the Woodley Park Historic District. Plans were prepared by Mark Kramer, Kramer Architects, Inc.

Property Description and Context

2707 Woodley Road NW is a two and a half story brick rowhouse on a short block built in 1921. It is the center house in a row of five Georgian Revival houses built on the same permit by architects W.C. & A.N. Miller. The ensemble is symmetrically composed with 2707 featuring a large, flat front engaged dormer flanked by short runs of balusters. This is a singular feature in the roofscape of the row which is otherwise a simple mansard of green glazed clay roof tiles.

From the rear, the house is at the foot of a long north-south alley. The alley conditions of the square have remained generally unaltered and consist of simple flat roof brick garages. While the rears of many houses on the square have changed in traditional ways (extended ells, enclosed porches, changes in cladding materials), few if any have been altered with the addition of a new story on the main part of the house.¹

Proposal

Applicant proposes to remove the full width of the roof for a distance of 30 feet from the rear base of the mansard running to the rear wall. In this space would be erected a full height story to replace the unfinished half-story that currently exists. The roof would be constructed from pre-manufactured trusses with an asymmetric profile with the shorter front slope of the truss raked at a lower slope than taller and longer rear slope (Figure 1). The highest and most forward point of the truss would be an eave overhang approximately 10 feet back (measured level) from the ridge of the existing mansard, and 3'-6" up from a line level with the mansard ridge. The roof material would be standing seam metal.

The rear wall of the addition would be setback 9'-0" from the existing rear wall which is actually an enclosed frame porch. In that way, the rear wall of the addition would rest flush with the historic masonry rear wall below. The rear fenestration of the addition consists of a barely off-center full-lite door flanked on either side by paired casement windows. A portion of the roof

¹ 2712 27th Street NW is the only house on the square with any kind of roof top addition. Its conditions are unique however. The lot is a very narrow sliver lot which provides no space for a rear yard. The rooftop addition is a much older vintage, indicating that it is the work of one of its first owners in an effort to make use of all available space on the overly cramped lot.

above the existing porch would be fenced-in to allow for a walk-out deck from the roof top addition.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The Board has typically taken a liberal stance when reviewing rear alterations and additions to rowhouses, recognizing that rear elevations are less significant in defining the character of a building, and historically where buildings have been added on to and altered to meet changing needs. Roof top additions have been more problematic, as adding “up” is not a traditional way of expanding a building and more often threatens to compromise significant features of an historic building, row, or streetscape. Most often, roof additions alter the height and simple block-like massing of the building to which they are being added. Roof additions have only very occasionally been approved where they have been found not to alter significant character-defining features, are not visible from public streets, and can be found consistent in height and massing with their context.

Not only must a roof addition of this type and size be evaluated carefully because of the above principals, but in this case there is no predecessor on this square for a similar rooftop addition. This would be the first of its kind in this area.

For the purposes of evaluating potential visibility from Woodley Road, Staff conducted a flag test of the highest and most forward portion of the proposed addition. Markers were erected at a point 9’-6” level back from the mansard roof ridge and at a height of 4’-0” above the mansard. These markers were not visible from wide angles east and west of 2707 Woodley, primarily because the adjoining neighbor mansards project slightly forward from 2707. When viewed on center, the markers were only minimally visible. This indicates the proposed roof addition can be feasibly modified so that it is entirely non-visible from the Woodley Road right-of-way. Staff recommends all construction be setback on minimum of 12 feet back from the mansard ridge and not exceed 4 feet above the mansard. Furthermore, where the addition ties into the existing mansard should be lower than what is indicated in the concept drawings. The ridge is capped by interlocking glazed clay tiles with a very distinctive profile in common with the entire row. This ridge of historic materials should remain unaltered.

An added assurance for non-visibility would be if the addition were framed on site rather than built off site. Not only would this allow for maximum flexibility during construction to adjust for any unanticipated visibility, but frame construction on site could result in a simpler, more traditional profile. This profile, which will be visible from the rear alleys, would consist of a front and back slope meeting at a simple ridge. Paired with the fact that the slope of the rooftop addition would be nearly parallel to the existing roof, this should result in a fairly modest, compatible alteration. The architect for the project has verbally committed to staff that the roof will be revised to this simpler profile, but he was unable to revise drawings prior to distribution of this report.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the conceptual design for the rooftop addition with a simple two-slope ridged profile, and that final approval be delegated to staff on the conditions that no alteration (including any new parapets) shall be visible from the Woodley Road right-of-way, and the existing ridge tiles shall remain. No part of this recommendation should be construed as approval for any necessary zoning relief.



Figure 1. 2707 Woodley Road NW, rear. Massing model rendered by HPO.